

Polk County Chamber of Commerce

2018 Fall Candidate Forum

Due to time, all questions submitted for candidates were not able to be answered during the Candidate Forum held on Tuesday, October 23rd. Candidates received these questions on Wednesday, October 24th and were asked to submit answers by Monday, October 29th at 9AM. Please see the below responses from candidates who responded by the deadline given.

County Commission District 3

Ray Carter

Would you support requesting new proposals for expired contract services, such as emergency medical services?

As a baseline answer – yes, unless there are circumstances that may indicate otherwise. There may be terms of an existing contract that make extending that contract more beneficial, or the importance of continuity in the ongoing efforts of a contract where a renewal may be more beneficial, or market conditions indicate that current pricing or service delivery may be much different (higher cost or less services) with a complete rebid. Each incident will have to be weighted on its merits and potential benefits.

What is your educational background that qualifies you for the position?

I am a 1976 graduate of Cedartown High School, 1979 graduate of Floyd Junior College and completed my Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management at Belhaven University. I also graduated from the Northwest Ga Regional Police Academy as Top Honor Graduate in 1979. I hold additional certificates for Strategic Planning, Economic and Leadership Development and AGILE Processes. My professional experience is also extensive. I spent 6 years with the Polk County Police department, 7 years in Special Operations and Emergency Planning at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, and 5 years as an Emergency Planning consultant for DOE. In 1995, I was recruited by Amoco for their Fabrics and Fibers headquarters in Atlanta. Five years later and after a merger with BP and outsourcing to IBM, I found myself as a business manager for IBM, the foremost US technical business services company, where I have now been for almost 18 years.

Please identify at least 3 goals you plan to focus on, and how you would measure if these goals are achieved.

1. Foster and implement a proactive Strategic Plan, measured as a milestone upon publication and implementation. 2. Ensure the two aspects of Ad Valorem taxation (assessments/tax digest and mileage) are completely and accurately administered, measure as resolution to the current assessment and tax digest issues identified by the State of Ga, and reconciliation of that revenue stream within the County's M&O budget. 3. Drive the success of local Economic Development through the recruitment and expansion of industrial and commercial prospects, measured as net new jobs, long term increase in commercial and industrial tax base, and per capita income.

What are the 3 most pressing issues facing Polk County and how would you propose a solution or corrective action to be undertaken?

1. Employee Retention – complete a market-based evaluation of existing pay and benefits program, including career progression opportunities. Based on those outcomes, adjust as necessary those aspects which are the primary causes of employee turnover. 2. The absence of viable industrial property and county infrastructure (water, sewer, fire services) that can readily attract larger prospects, typically that will bring increase wage rates to the area. The county should complete the appropriate analysis to determine the most feasible locations to develop/improve county infrastructure and secure rights, either by options or purchase, to those properties which can readily be developed for/by large prospects. It is critical to make this part of our strategic planning process and incorporate this as immediate goals. 3. A property assessment program that is clearly not being managed and implemented in compliance with state requirements, which has created the necessity of tax mileage increase to simply sustain previous revenue levels. An accurate and complete audit of the Tax Assessor's office and general conduct of operations should be undertaken with recommendations for future improvements and resolution of compliance issues identified. Standard operating procedures should then be corrected as necessary to ensure the digest remains within State guidelines. Please keep in mind that other issues/initiatives are already under review/action by the current commission and would therefore be considered a continuing priority for me, such as the landfill issues.

If elected, what is your platform to build bridges (not walls) and unify the existing divide among all races in our community?

Quite simply, I will not tolerate discrimination for any reason. We were all created equal and must be afforded equal opportunity in our daily lives. We foster that individually through our daily actions and attitudes which should be visible and applied to each person we encounter. As a group, our employees and programs must also behave to those standards, understanding that every citizen is our customer, and will be treated with the respect and dignity each deserves. Corporately as a community, I will lead from the front, engaging in multiple activities within the county, to build relationships and a broader understanding of each of our citizens as well as let you see who I am. We must all be open to step

beyond our doors, our families and our neighborhoods and engage all the great people we have in this community.

How do you, as a candidate, define economic development?

From a policy perspective, economic development can be defined as efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base. With that perspective in hand, there are few things I am more passionate about than viable economic development. This is an area where our cities and county can find common ground and work closely together for a bright future. As a board member for the Development Authority of Polk County, I work alongside our DAPC President Missy Kendrick, We have seen excellent growth from our exiting industry and have multiple prospects and opportunities under consideration at this time. With a highly touted College and Career Academy, and a fruitful partnership with Georgia Northwestern Technical College, we are preparing our youth and retraining our existing workforce to ensure we maximize our potential locally.

Is the establishment of a paid fire department for unincorporated Polk County a priority for you and can you pledge to the rural voters that you will work to make that happen during your term as commissioner?

Yes! Let me first say that our fire volunteers have done an excellent job. I recall the early days of the departments when as a dispatcher for the Polk Co Police Dept I also had to dispatch for fire and ambulance. Quite a lot has changed in those 40 years. The tools available to the firefighter and training are far more advance. Population and the number of properties and values have drastically increased and people's expectations are often establish by what they see on TV, whether real or imagined for dramatic effects. Through mutual aid agreements, Rockmart FD provides initial responder aid up to 3 miles beyond their city limits. Cedartown FD maintains a homeowner subscription service to do the same for fire and is also a first responder to other life threatening emergencies. However, to really face the inevitable growth, residential, commercial and industrial, we must move forward with what I see initially as a hybrid fire service. This would include several stations with minimal full-time staffing that can be deployed with the proper equipment to an emergency. That response is then supplemented by our volunteer force, as well as any mutual aid support that may be in place. As our population and accompanying tax base increase, the maturity of the paid staff can be further implemented.

What do you think are the positive efforts made and the areas for improvement in our efforts to promote economic development in our county? How do we enhance our efforts to promote tourism and commercial retail growth in our downtown?

Contrary to the opinions of some, Polk county has three active and well-functioning economic development authorities. Both Cedartown and Rockmart have an established authority that has historically purchased the appropriate land and developed the infrastructure needed to attract industry. The Development Authority of Polk County, while not being the primary industrial property owner, has

typically been charged as the primary point of contact with our state developers from the Department of Economic Development. We were fortunate two years ago to bring on board one of the top economic developers in the state, Missy Kendrick. Missy is also serving as the President of the Georgia Economic Developers Association this year. I believe her talents have been instrumental in bringing about a significant increase in the prospects we have coming to Polk County, the successful new businesses we have landed as well as the major growth of our existing industries. She has enhanced our offering package and work closely with the County Commission, and both city authorities to drive our efforts in a single, county wide focus. She also has been able to bring the Polk School Board back into our development efforts and manage through significant cost savings and avoidance opportunities. To sum it up, I believe that as this time, Polk County has three professionally staffed and knowledgeable authorities lead by an excellent professional that has afforded us opportunities to attract many more prospects. I believe we will continue to see the fruits of that combination for years. Additionally, within the last year we have seen our Chamber of Commerce revitalized, with an intentional focus on our small business and downtowns. To continue this focus, it is critical for all to provide their support through membership, either as a small business owner or simply an interested member of our community.

Why does the county need new taxes along with budget cuts?

Just like your family, every government entity faces the increased cost of operations. This can be due to increased personnel costs such as wages and insurance, cost of materials, continuous need to replace capital equipment, and finally, the addition of state and federal laws that mandate explicit standards each must follow, such as water treatment, storm water containment, width and paving specifications of various roadways, and new or expanded operating guidelines that must be followed. We also witnessed the highly taunted effort of our state legislators to eliminate the infamous birthday tax, which was an ad valorem tax and tag charge typically due on the owner's birthday. What they didn't say is that was actually the removal of a local tax, which was then reallocated to the state at the time of a sale or other title transfer. In Polk County alone, that meant the removal of almost \$8 million in our tax digest over the last 4 years. Budget cuts are difficult to attain. Most government bodies, especially the small size of Polk County, have normally operated at a bare bones level anyway. Cost can often be reduced in one area, only to be consumed somewhere else. At the end of the day, true budget reductions are non-existent, rather only the rate of growth is reduced. As far as new taxes, there are none I am aware that has or can be implemented by the county. Taxing authority is provided through our state constitution and other laws. From a sales tax perspective, there is a base 4% that goes to the state, a 1% LOST and 1% SPLOST voted on at the county level, and distributed to the county and cities on an agreed allocation formula, and finally a 1% Education SPLOST, which only goes to the school system. As you can see from this discussion, there are many more factors that are driving higher costs, while the county has limited means by which to increase revenue through taxes.

How do you feel your experience as an elected official will help you work with the public and represent all citizens?

As I noted during the forum, I served nine years as a Rockmart City Councilman. During that time, I spearheaded the concept of the purchase of the old Rockmart High school and renovation into the

beautiful Rockmart Civic complex, Senior Center and Historical Museum we have today. We adopted and implemented more stringent development and building codes to ensure the integrity of future development. We fostered the initiation of a Community Development organization that actively recruited new business. And we ensured our residents were properly served with infrastructure upgrades in streets, water and sewer services, downtown renovations and quality customer service at every interaction. All these actions were instrumental in laying the foundation for the viable growth the City of Rockmart has experienced since that time. For the last 3 years, I have served as a member of the Development Authority of Polk County, where we are seeing the growth of our existing industries as well as many prospects that are now considering Polk County as their destination for future growth. I also have extensive experience in government agencies, having been employed over 6 years by the Polk County Police Dept and 13 years of service and consulting with the US Department of Energy Defense Programs. I have an intimate knowledge of local, state and federal accounting and employee practices, as well as being well verse in local legislation development and adoption. This experience has allowed me the opportunity to lead from the front, posing creative and innovative solutions to local issues and services. I believe I can use my full range of talents to effectively work with our intelligent and competent team of commissioners to better Polk County.

Since the intended purpose of the SPLOST is not very specific on the ballot, can you please be more specific and tell how you think these funds should be earmarked? Please base your answer on what you see as funding priorities.

In the initial years of the SPLOST provisions within state law, it was quite clearly stated how specific the planned revenue was to be planned for significant capital projects, which primarily was intended for facility and infrastructure projects. However, in the last 20 years, the law has been altered to allow less specificity in descriptions and broaden the expenses that could be included, such as general operating vehicles and equipment. And I would agree there was a need for that broader definition as the expense of public safety and heavy equipment sky rocketed. In an effort to demonstrate how our SPLOST funds had been spent in the recent past, the County along with the cities held 2 informational town hall meetings. One was in Cedartown on 10/15 and the other in Rockmart the following evening. I attended both and thought all parties provided good presentation of how the past SPLOST revenues had been spent. They also presented some clarification about the future expenditures that were included within the less than descriptive listings on the ballot. Our County and City Managers as well as numerous elected officials were available to address specific questions through individual engagement and discussion. Unfortunately, it appeared few citizens took the opportunity to capitalize on this event. As I have indicated in some previous answers, there are priorities where I feel the SPLOST revenues should be focused over the next six years. These include: 1. Economic Development for the development of viable industrial property and county infrastructure (water, sewer, fire services) that can readily attract larger prospects, and the marketing necessary to pursue new prospects. 2. Establishment of county-wide fire services with full time staffed stations consisting of both Paid and volunteer firefighters. 3. Planning and implementation of County/City consolidation of public safety entities (both police and fire) to truly address the duplication of services and cost affecting our county. 4. Professional development of our tax assessment practices and operations, which will likely include the purchase and implementation of GIS based data systems to better identify likely changes in area values as well as provide better tools to qualified assessors. 5. Development of new local legislation to address the transport and disposal of

unknown waste materials from outside our county, to include necessary enforcement actions that would be required.

Jeri Purdy

Would you support requesting new proposals for expired contract services, such as emergency medical services?

YES- Ultimately the decision to seek new proposals should take into consideration the cost that is currently incurred with the existing contracts, and what would be the best fit for the entire County. EMS services currently with Redmond are on a year-to-year basis with a minimum agreement within to renew annually for 10 years. The Board can opt to give notice on the anniversary date of June 22, if they choose to bid out the services. There would then be a 1-year time frame to negotiate.

What is your educational background that qualifies you for the position?

Paulding County High School Graduate - Kennesaw College Major-Education Minor-Accounting
Currently enrolled at GNTC pursuing degree in Marketing-Business Management, Phi Beta Lambda
Rockmart Georgia Initiative for Community Housing GICH Team

Please identify at least 3 goals you plan to focus on, and how you would measure if these goals are achieved.

See below question.

What are the 3 most pressing issues facing Polk County and how would you propose a solution or corrective action to be undertaken?

In my opinion, these two questions are asking the same thing. My goals are to focus on the most pressing issues.

1. County Services and their costs, wages, effectiveness of each department.
By looking at the costs of each department and determining what they contribute to the entire County vs. possible consolidation and if there would be a savings of salary, insurance, etc.
2. Crime and Drug issues that are affecting all areas of the County
Implementing Community-Involved programs, helping the citizens to feel more secure in their neighborhoods. Are the law-abiding citizens being heard when they voice a complaint through the proper channels? Do they fear reporting any illegal activities? If so, WHY?
3. Blight and its impact on the entire County.
Both sides of the County are actively pursuing the proper channels to address this issue. I feel that the County can be unified in the pursuit of the Land Bank that will make County owned real estate available for acquisition by individuals, companies and organizations in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors through sales and nominal consideration conveyances. Thereby returning vacant, abandoned and foreclosed properties to productive use and improving the overall value of the surrounding properties.

The landfill is a huge issue of discussion among the residents of the County, and at this time the current commission, who inherited it, have filed a lawsuit to ensure that the letter of the contract is being followed. I have been studying the contract and will be touring the landfill myself to address this issue. At this time, no one can make a promise that they will make it go away. Polk County and Waste Industries have a legal binding contract.

If elected, what is your platform to build bridges (not walls) and unify the existing divide among all races in our community?

This question is open-ended in that, I personally do not have an existing divide among any races. I'm not sure if the question was meant from the County or City viewpoint.

How do you, as a candidate, define economic development?

Improving the economic community of its citizens through investments to Public Safety, Health, Education, Housing and Employment Opportunities.

Is the establishment of a paid fire department for unincorporated Polk County a priority for you and can you pledge to the rural voters that you will work to make that happen during your term as commissioner?

YES – I am a Rural Resident, and this has been a need that should be reviewed by the Commission again.

What do you think are the positive efforts made and the areas for improvement in our efforts to promote economic development in our county? How do we enhance our efforts to promote tourism and commercial retail growth in our downtown?

This question is better suited to our Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority.

Why does the county need new taxes along with budget cuts?

Is this question referring to the SPLOST vote that is on the ballot? If so, this is not a new tax, but a continuation of the current .01 cent tax imposed on all purchases within the County, from both property owners and renters or visitors, thereby allowing the cost to be spread out to all of those that utilize our infrastructure and services. With the growth of any municipality, costs are going to grow also. Our County employees within some departments are understaffed and not being paid at the same rate as neighboring Counties, yet the citizens of Polk County expect the same level of service. Budget cuts are necessary when an area of expense is not performing as necessary or is found to be unneeded.

How do you feel your experience as an elected official will help you work with the public and represent all citizens?

In all my interactions with the members of any community, be it volunteer or employee, I always try to assess the best interest of everyone. I have always been honest, sometimes to my own detriment. I have spoken to several members of the community that have many good ideas that they feel need to be

implemented and explained to them that I will do my very best to seek out the answers that they are looking for. Not all things can be afforded at this time, but I would like to have the chance to bring these ideas into the discussion at the Commissioner level.

Since the intended purpose of the SPLOST is not very specific on the ballot, can you please be more specific and tell how you think these funds should be earmarked? Please base your answer on what you see as funding priorities.

The legal requirement of any municipality asking to utilize funds from a SPLOST must include at least 3 of the following:

- Law enforcement;
- Fire protection and fire safety;
- Road and street construction or maintenance;
- Solid waste management;
- Water supply or distribution or both;
- Waste-water treatment;
- Storm-water collection or disposal;
- Electric or gas utility services;
- Enforcement of building, housing, plumbing, and electrical codes and other similar codes;
- Planning and zoning;
- Recreational facilities;
- and • Library.

Proceeds from the 2014 SPLOST were utilized to purchase needed equipment to maintain service to Polk County citizens and community. Police, Fire, Sheriff's Office, Public Works, Animal Control, Building Inspection, Maintenance, Tax Assessor, Code Enforcement vehicles and equipment were purchased. Ultimately these will need to be maintained and/or replaced due to normal wear and tear, accidents or damage. The wages of our current employees need to be brought into line with other counties of our size and needs. Our 911 systems need technology upgrades and staff. The cell towers that are needed for our emergency radio communications. The current conditions of our roads, while they are being addressed, will require funds to make the needed improvements. The Agriculture Education Center that has already been proposed to the Commission, could be a huge asset to our community from both the agriculture, recreation, and tourism standpoint. The Quality of Life Projects that have already been proposed will allow citizen-based committees to make the decision where \$300,000 will be spent on their respective sides of the County.

Thank you for your Vote,

Jerilyn Purdy

Larry Reynolds

Would you support requesting new proposals for expired contract services, such as emergency medical services?

Absolutely. Sometimes contracts for service run for multiple years. Circumstances change over time, and there may be a need for better proposals that would benefit all Polk County citizens. These changes should reflect the Polk County needs, and eliminate what Polk might not need going forward. Pay for what you get and not pay for what you don't need.

What is your educational background that qualifies you for the position?

I enlisted in the military right out of high school and enrolled in a service school after completing boot camp. While working at Ford Motor Company, I took in house college courses that allowed me to become a salaried office employee, a line supervisor over 32 people, and eventually promoted to a position where I had direct reports of 7 supervisors, and indirect responsibility for 185 employees. During my time as supervisor, I had to deal with strict budgets, strategic planning, employee relations, deadlines and production issues.

Please identify at least 3 goals you plan to focus on, and how you would measure if these goals are achieved.

Goals suggest an agenda, and my only goal is to serve Polk County to the best of my abilities! Agendas by Commissioners can be troublesome (costly, wasteful and divisive). But issues I feel that needs attention are:

1. All Public Safety Departments – I feel these departments should be funded to the level that allows them to do their job as required by law. Measure: budget/results
2. Multi-County contacts – Assure Polk County is not paying more than their fair share. Measure: budget/results
3. Compliance with State and Federal Laws – It’s essential to communicate with the department heads, receive their feedback and take actions to assure compliance. Measure: Comprehensive oversight/no violations cited by any State and Federal agencies

What are the 3 most pressing issues facing Polk County and how would you propose a solution or corrective action to be undertaken?

“Pressing issues” is a very subjective term. It can be, and I assume is, based on each individual’s background, race, economic status, gender, religion, education level, place of residence and multiple factors. In no priority order:

1. *Crime/drug problem* – Corrective action: Sufficiently funded law enforcement agencies
2. *Anticipated Growth* – Communications between all governmental agencies within the county that help plan for growth. Corrective action: Have open dialogue with all stakeholders.
3. *Transparency* – The need for all decisions made by the BOC’s to reflect what is best for ALL of the citizens of Polk, not for special people, not a particular area, and not specific groups. Every citizen should be treated with equal respect regardless of where they live, their background, or who they know. Corrective action: Study the issues before the BOC and act accordingly.

If elected, what is your platform to build bridges (not walls) and unify the existing divide among all races in our community?

Be ready, willing and able to attend any called town hall meeting and answer questions by any legitimate organization or group that seeks to bring people together. Have conversations with people, find their concerns and then seek answers.

How do you, as a candidate, define economic development?

Promoting the environment that would encourage businesses and companies to come to Polk County. Stress the positives, recognize the weaknesses and seek to correct those weaknesses. Project a united front from representatives from all governmental organizations in the county to prospective companies and businesses.

Is the establishment of a paid fire department for unincorporated Polk County a priority for you and can you pledge to the rural voters that you will work to make that happen during your term as commissioner?

At some point in the future I will, but not right now. Growth will demand Polk have a paid Fire Department. No one can predict when that time will arrive. We do not need to wait until that demand arrives to start the planning though. It would NOT be an immediate flip in the county, or eliminate the volunteer fire department even if paid firefighters were hired. Funding will be a problem, in that Rockmart and Cedartown have already paid for, and maintain a paid fire department. I cannot see either "giving" up their departments to become part of a "Polk County Fire Department". I do see in the future, 2 strategically placed Polk fire stations, ideally middle East and West on highway 278. With those as anchors in the middle, and mutual assistance from Rockmart and Cedartown FD's, with the volunteers included, that level of fire protection MIGHT allow everyone in the county to have reduced homeowners insurance for fire.

What do you think are the positive efforts made and the areas for improvement in our efforts to promote economic development in our county? How do we enhance our efforts to promote tourism and commercial retail growth in our downtown?

I've known people involved in our Economic Development for years, most well qualified, and do a great job with limited and small budget for the task they are given. Enhanced effort: Ideally, I would like to see someone who speaks on behalf of the entire county verses one particular city. Someone that would promote growth for all segments. Present a united front from all stakeholders whenever a business or company visits. A professional, as the speaker, should be the one presenting our message and try to limit comments from individuals from the entities, limiting comments to hopefully keep from muddling the message the EDA is trying to present. Once incorrect comment or statement could, and probably has, killed a deal.

Why does the county need new taxes along with budget cuts?

I can only assume that, before funding the necessary and required offices by the Constitution, too much attention was given to agendas and programs favored by some Commissioners. Nice feel good programs in effect, but not necessary programs that provide a benefit to be used for the majority of the Polk County citizens. Programs that if cut or eliminated, would hamper Commissioners re-election chances.

Departments that changed employment requirements might have been cut, but what budget cuts? 2017 budget final: \$19,937,000, 2018 final \$22,194,512, 2019 adopted \$22,114,371. \$80,141 cut in 2019 after raising budget by \$2,257,515 since 2017?

How do you feel your experience as an elected official will help you work with the public and represent all citizens?

I'm making a personal commitment to everyone that there are no special people, no special groups, and no special business, therefore every citizen of Polk County should be treated equally regardless of ANY other factor. I can, and will talk to anybody about any action that I take, and explain my reasoning behind my decision. I would try to answer and address any concerns they would have about our Polk County government.

Since the intended purpose of the SPLOST is not very specific on the ballot, can you please be more specific and tell how you think these funds should be earmarked? Please base your answer on what you see as funding priorities.

Every issue that falls within the parameters of the SPLOST will have to be taken on a 1-by-1 basis. Proposals written broadly to allow addressing needs, but that need has to fall within those parameters. At some time soon those identified needs will come forward, and then the Board of Commissioners will have to act, and hopefully in the best interest of all Polk citizens. I've said it before, no one likes paying taxes, but what they dislike even more, is to see their tax dollars spent foolishly, wasteful, and with no good outcome to the county. I cannot specify a priority since I do not know the parameters language.

State School Superintendent

Sonia Francis-Rolle

What do you feel is the purpose of education?

The purpose of education is to provide ALL students with the necessary skills in order to transition into work, career, post-secondary or technical skilled education or other post-secondary educational career aspirations.

Do you believe the state is limiting educations' potential by mandating repetitive paperwork?

Absolutely! While paperwork may be necessary for accountability purposes, educators, in particular teachers, should not be inundated with paperwork. There needs to be a review of the necessity for the paperwork and decide the extent of the need. In addition, districts need to review other options for

paperwork completions, such as hiring administrative staff to complete the paperwork, among other administrative duties.

Parents, students and teachers are concerned with the amount of testing that is now required in school. What policies might help address these concerns?

There is a concern among parents, teachers and students not because there are too many test, but in reality, students are not prepared academically to measure the success of their academic progress. Test are necessary to measure student success. Without any measure of success, what will be the purpose of teaching. Teachers need time to teach; they need space to be creative and use their own expertise; the administrative teaching scripts should be abolished; they need to have time to refresh their skills without the fear of feeling that they are looked upon as being incompetent; less unproductive meetings during their planning time; smaller class sizes; when needed, support to assist struggling students in class; strict adherence to special education regulations to provide classroom assistance to students with disabilities, ie, IEP as prescribed; alternative classroom instruction for students with discipline challenges; aggressive partnerships with agencies to assist with students in need of support services. When all of the above mentioned are implemented in the schools, all students, teachers and parents will be looking forward to the test to see how well students are preparing for their life's journey.

Do you feel that growing class sizes are conducive for effective learning?

No! Growing class sizes are not conducive to effective teaching. It is a hindrance to the successful effective delivery of instruction, especially in classes with students who have shown a need for academic support in subject areas. In addition, discipline issues definitely limit success in the classroom.

Do you believe public schools are failing to prepare students for the real world?

Yes. In some schools, there is a serious disconnect of what students are learning and real-world reality. While basic knowledge is fundamental to the success of each student, there must be a connection with real world life skills, pre-requisite fundamental basic knowledge to be successful in any career or college preparation.

In your opinion, what role is the federal government best suited to play with regard to educational policy?

It has been my 30 plus years of experience that the federal government's role served as a funding entitlement programs to supplement or support traditional local education at the state level. With the financial support often comes strict guidelines or policies that appear to be intrusive or dictatorial in nature. I believe that due to the neutrality of education, we should look at all support private, federal or local as a tool or support schools to meet the needs of all children. Given differing political views, some states see the role of the federal government as an asset and others as a liability that enacts a one size fits all guidelines, which can be problematic.

Would you support the state stepping in to alter school calendars and extend Summer Break?

I would be very interested in knowing from school districts, the validity of state intervention on school calendars and extended summer breaks. If there is a need to help with coordination of school calendars to solve an ongoing issue with schools needing help across the state, this would be an agreeable plan with all stakeholders. If no invitation or a need for state assistance with coordination, then the answer will be no to stepping in to alter calendars or extended summer breaks.

How would you make sure that hiring practices throughout the state are fair and based on experience rather than “who you know?”

There are strict HR federal and state guidelines as it relates to hiring practices. There may be some lack of hiring guidelines that allow for inappropriate hiring that hinders children’s opportunities to access to quality personnel, as opposed to hiring someone that says yes to everyone and everything. Knowing that this is a serious problem statewide, I can put some measures in place to deter this practice. Provide a number for complaints that can be handled within the department of education; provide resources that the communities can utilize to access where federally funded program’s hiring malpractice can be accessed to file complaints; the third option would be to review, and amend or create state legislation or policies with grievance procedures that prohibits hiring practices that do not provide maximum quality of personnel for children.